

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (Original): A method for producing a magnetic recording medium comprising at least a nonmagnetic undercoat layer, a magnetic layer, and a protective layer laminated sequentially on a nonmagnetic substrate, comprising the step of:

forming said magnetic layer by RF sputtering of a sputtering target for the magnetic recording medium, and wherein

said sputtering target for the magnetic recording medium comprises a mixture of a metal and an oxide, and

a particle diameter of said oxide in the sputtering target is 10  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.

Claim 6 (Original): The method for producing a magnetic recording medium as claimed in claim 5, wherein the particle diameter of said oxide in the sputtering target is 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.

Claim 7 (Original): The method for producing a magnetic recording medium as claimed in claim 5, wherein said sputtering target is a mixture comprising an alloy

containing at least Co and Pt, and at least one oxide selected from the group consisting of oxides of Si, Ti, Zr, Al and Cr.

Claim 8 (Original): The method for producing a magnetic recording medium as claimed in claim 6, wherein said sputtering target is a mixture comprising an alloy containing at least Co and Pt, and at least one oxide selected from the group consisting of oxides of Si, Ti, Zr, Al and Cr.

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (New): A method for producing a magnetic recording medium, comprising the steps of:

providing a sputtering target comprising a mixture of a metal and an oxide, which oxide has a particle diameter of 10  $\mu\text{m}$  or less; and

forming a magnetic layer by RF sputtering of the sputtering target,

wherein the magnetic recording medium comprises at least a nonmagnetic undercoat layer, a magnetic layer, and a protective layer laminated sequentially on a nonmagnetic substrate, wherein the magnetic layer has been obtained by RF sputtering of a sputtering target for the magnetic recording medium, the sputtering target comprising a mixture, which comprises an alloy containing at least Co and Pt, and at least one oxide selected from the group consisting of oxides of Si, Ti, Zr, Al and Cr, and the particle diameter of said oxide is 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.